



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

things no reverence, religion was almost extinct. Even in those worst of times she still retained the germs of vitality; she still preserved the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel: she still was the depository of the Word of God; and when religion was re-animated in the world, it was not by the overthrow of the Church and the institution of a new society, but by the exertions of teachers from her own bosom, who had nothing to do but to clear her from modern corruptions, to claim their true place for the doctrines which had been from the beginning, using no other instrument of reformation, than the Scriptures, which she had never parted with.

Matthew xviii. 17.—“Hear the Church.”

This is one of the texts which, in want of better, are sometimes brought forward to prove the infallibility of the Church. We have before had occasion to show how little it has to do with that question, and here we again print the context of the passage, that those readers who are not familiar with the Bible may be able to see how very unfair is the controversial use which has been attempted to be made of this text:—

“If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.”

Here, then, we see that the text refers not to questions of doctrine at all, but to private disputes between Christians, and especially at the time when they formed a small society in the midst of heathens. They are directed, if they fail to settle their differences amicably among themselves, or by the intervention of friends, to bring the case—*not before a heathen law court* (see 1 Cor. vi.), but before the Church. Of course it does not mean the Church universal, which could not possibly take cognizance of every private dispute among Christians, but the particular congregation to which the parties belonged. And either party refusing to submit to the arbitration of the Church was to be treated as a heathen—as excommunicate from their society. All this is so very plain and simple that we can scarcely acquit of dishonesty those controversialists who wrest what is said about the decisions of particular churches on points of private difference between Christians, as if it were meant of decisions of the universal Church in points of doctrine.

1 Tim. iii. 15, 16.—“That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness—God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

On the words “pillar and ground of the truth,” applied to the Church in the foregoing text, an argument is founded in behalf of the infallibility of the Church.

As our article has already run to great length, we shall not raise a question as to whether the words “pillar and ground of the truth” refer to the Church at all; although Gregory Nyssen and other Fathers understand them here as spoken of Timothy himself, while other distinguished men read them in connection with what follows, understanding, by the “pillar and ground of the truth,” those fundamental doctrines contained in the 16th verse; just in the same way that the Apostle’s Creed is called by so many Fathers the pillar of the truth (Epiphanius), the foundation of the faith (Augustine), &c. But understanding the words as referring to the Church, there is no difficulty in explaining them. The Church is that body which preserves and keeps, which maintains and upholds, the Christian faith; and just as heretical congregations were the pillars and stays of falsehood, maintained and defended it, testified to it and endeavoured to continue it to posterity; just so is the Church the pillar and ground of truth; it professes the Christian faith, and maintains it as the truth of God, notwithstanding all the persecutions of its enemies.

Neither is there any difficulty in showing what the words do *not* mean. The Church is not the foundation on which the truth is built, and is not that which gives it authority and makes it be truth. On the contrary, the truth is the foundation on which the Church is built, and is what makes it to be a Church. So St. Chrysostom, on this very passage, says—“The truth is the pillar and ground of the Church,” and we have Scripture testimony to the same position.—Eph. ii. 20, 21, 22; Matthew xvi. 18.

Again, nothing is more certain than that this phrase, “pillar and ground of the truth,” did not, in the judgment of the early Church, imply infallibility. It is applied, as we have said, by Gregory Nyssen, to Timothy, by St. Basil to Musonius, Bishop of Neo Caesarea, Ep. 67; to Athanasius of Ancyra, Ep. 62; by Gregory Nyssen to Basil, Or. 19; to Athanasius, Or. 23; to Eusebius of Samosata, Ep. 29. We could add to our list, but we may give instead the statement of Gregory Nyssen, that every pious member of the Church may lay claim to this title. The following is his explanation of the passage in question; and though, in our private judgment, it is not the most natural way of interpreting the text to refer the words to Timothy, yet those who have sworn (as all Roman Catholic priests have once) to interpret Scripture according

to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, will never hereafter, we hope, venture to apply this text to the Catholic Church—“Paul, while he builds up the illustrious Timothy as a house to receive God, places in it these two pillars, on one of which he inscribes the name of faith, and on the other conscience. . . . By both these we may become such pillars as Peter, and James, and John, or if there be any one else that hath been, or shall be worthy of this name. For whosoever is perfected in these two commandments [to love God, and to love his neighbour], he is framed to be a pillar and ground of the truth, according to the language of the Apostle.”—Hom. 14, in Cant. Cantic., vol. i., p. 684. Paris, 1638. Now, since it will not be pretended that Musonius, or Basil, or Eusebius, or that every pious Christian is infallible, we see that it is a modern fancy that these words “pillar and ground of the truth” imply infallibility.

We have not space for the consideration of more texts; but we have the satisfaction of thinking that we have devoted the limited space at our disposal to the discussion of those texts which the believers in the infallibility of the Church think to be the strongest in their favour. And the conclusion from the whole is, that there is not one whit more Scriptural ground for believing in an infallible Church than in an impeccable Church—that though our Lord is ever with his Church—though he has given it his Spirit, who is both a Spirit of truth and a Spirit of holiness—though that Spirit has prevented the sin and error of the world from shutting out his people from eternal life, yet that perfect truth or perfect holiness are not attainable in the present dispensation.

ALEXANDER VI. AND HENRY VIII.

It is a matter of common observation, that when one of two rival disputants is worsted in an argument, he very frequently loses his temper, and begins to abuse his opponents, or his opponents’ supposed friends and supporters. Sometimes, too, when a man feels that his cause is entirely indefensible, he is apt to have recourse to personal invective, in the hope that, by distracting the attention of his adversary from the real point at issue, he may be enabled to avoid a defeat which would otherwise have been inevitable. These attempts to make invective supply the want of argument, remind us of the story of the lawyer, who being retained in a cause in which justice was not exactly on his side, on opening his brief found only the concise instructions—“No case; abuse the plaintiff’s attorney.”

Our Skibbereen correspondent, Mr. James Willson, whose letter we printed at length in our last number, and from whom we have received another letter since indited in a similar spirit, appears to act on the principle just alluded to. Unwilling or unable to enter the fair field of argument, he has had recourse to the ignoble weapons of abuse and invective. Those persons who were formerly instrumental in promoting the cause of the Reformation are, of course, the objects of his bitterest censure. According to him, “the murderous, the adulterous, the incestuous King Henry VIII. was the founder of the iniquitous, perjurant, antichristian Church of England. He stigmatizes Luther as ‘an envious, proud friar, the firebrand of hell, the arch-heretic.’ And he finally winds up his denunciations by the sweeping assertion that we have ‘calumniated Popes, Popery, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, the confessional—in fact, anything Catholic—all Christianity.’”

To the charge against ourselves, urged as it is without a shadow of proof or foundation, we shall not condescend to offer a word of reply. And we may safely leave the character of the great German reformer to the judgment of more cool and dispassionate critics than Mr. Willson of Skibbereen. It was wittily observed by Erasmus, in the life-time of Luther, in reference to the hostile attacks which were then made upon him—“Luther has committed two unpardonable faults: he touched the monks’ bellies and the Pope’s crown.” And we may add that the deadly enmity of some Roman Catholic writers to the memory of Luther only proves how keenly they feel the fatal injury which was inflicted upon the Church of Rome by his means.

As regards the character of Henry VIII., however, and his connection with the English Reformation, we desire, more for our readers’ sake than our own, to say a few words. This has always been a favourite topic with Roman Catholic controversialists, who have sought, by exposing the faults of that monarch’s history, to throw discredit on the origin of the great religious movement which severed England from the Papal See. And yet, it needs but a moment’s reflection to see that this question is one which is entirely irrelevant to the real point at issue between the two Churches—namely, the truth or falsehood of the doctrines which they respectively hold.

Let it be granted, for the sake of argument, that the character of Henry VIII. was as bad, and his motives as corrupt, as his worst enemies have represented them to be, we ask, what has this to do with the religious part of the controversy, the only part in which people of the present day have any real interest or concern? The character of the founder of a new religion may, indeed, be fairly called in question, when we wish to form a judgment as to the nature of the religious system which he taught. We may point out the features of the Mahometan creed, for example, which were impressed upon it by the peculiar tem-

perament and position of Mahomet himself; but this analogy is totally inapplicable to the case of the English Reformation. Our readers do not need to be told that the Church of England claims to be in possession of a system of Divine truth, which was taught by Christ and his Apostles, and with which the character of Henry VIII. has as little to do as that of Confucius.

We assert, in opposition to the Church of Rome, that the sacrifice of the mass is unscriptural and unlawful: is it any answer to be told that Henry VIII. was a cruel and inconstant husband? We call in question the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope; we are met by the reply, that Henry VIII. beheaded Catherine Howard. We believe that there is but one Mediator, and that invocation of saints is forbidden: “no matter,” it is said, “the Church of England was founded by a monster who had six wives!” Surely such puerile attempts to mislead inquirers from the real and momentous points at issue only indicate the inherent weakness of the adversary’s cause.

But, perhaps, a more effective way of checking such a line of controversy for the future will be, to show how easily it can be retorted against Roman Catholics themselves. As the character of Henry VIII. has been so frequently brought upon the stage by Romish controversialists, it can scarcely be deemed unreasonable to compare the personal history of this monarch with that of some contemporaneous Pope. This comparison is, indeed, almost forced upon us by the arguments of one of our chief opponents. Cardinal Bellarmine, as it is well known, has specified “holiness of life of the doctors of the Church” as one of his “notes” whereby the true Church may be distinguished; and where are we to look for holiness, if not in the Church’s infallible head, who claims the title of “His Holiness” as his proper and peculiar designation? Our only apprehension is, lest the ghost of the king may haunt us for our unfairness, in venturing to expect as much virtue and self-denial from a mere earthly monarch, as from the wearer of the triple crown—the vicar and vicergerent of Christ upon earth.

We propose, therefore, for the information of our readers, to draw a brief parallel between Henry VIII. and the contemporaneous (or nearly contemporaneous)* Pontiff, Alexander VI. We shall perform this task with the strictest fairness and impartiality; and for this end, the facts relating to the history of the Pope shall be taken from the most unimpeachable Roman Catholic authorities, Guiccardini, Burchard,† Moreri, Cardinal Bembo, and others.

In estimating the character of Henry VIII. we are prepared, for the sake of brevity, to admit all, or nearly all, that his enemies have laid to his charge. The most eminent English historian who has treated of his reign, declares that he was violent, cruel, profuse, rapacious, bigoted, and unjust. Lest our Roman Catholic readers should feel any undue triumph in this matter, however, we must remind them of a fact which is often forgotten—namely, that up to the very end of his life the religious opinions of this king were much more akin to those of the Church of Rome than the Church of England. In proof of this assertion, we need only refer to the atrocious Act of Six Articles, which he compelled his parliament to pass in 1539, a few years before the close of his reign.‡ By this Act all persons who denied the doctrine of the real presence were condemned to be burnt; and the denial of communion in one kind, of the perpetual obligation of vows of chastity, of private masses, of the celibacy of the clergy, or of auricular confession, subjected the offender to the forfeiture of all his goods and chattels, and imprisonment during the king’s pleasure. It is plain, therefore, that a monarch who enforced upon his subjects, under such severe penalties, the belief of all these points of orthodox Roman Catholic belief, must have been himself at heart much more of a Roman Catholic than a Protestant.

Let us now turn our eyes from the King to the Pontiff. Roderigo Lenzuoli was descended from a noble Spanish family. On the elevation of his maternal uncle, Alfonso Borgia, to the pontificate, under the title of Calixtus III., Roderigo was called to Rome, and, taking the name of Borgia, he was appointed Archbishop of Valencia, and Cardinal of S. Nicolo. After filling these high dignities for more than thirty-five years, he was elected Pope, under the title of Alexander VI.

So far, all the advantages were on the side of the Pontiff. Henry at his accession was young and inexperienced, and just set free from parental control. Alexander VI. had for years filled high ecclesiastical functions, imposing grave responsibilities; and he had reached the mature age of sixty before he was elected to fill the Papal throne. We may naturally expect, therefore, to find the latter free from those faults and vices which disgraced the character of the former.

But how stands the case? Alexander’s first act was to purchase the Papedom by the most flagitious bribery. We are told, in the diary of his Chamberlain Burchard, which

* A period of only six years intervened between the death of Alexander VI. and Henry’s succession to the throne. The former event happened in 1503, the latter in 1509.

† Burchard was Master of the Ceremonies to Alexander VI., and an eye-witness of many of the events which he describes. His diary, written in a curious mixture of Latin, French, and Italian, was published at Hanover, in 1696.

‡ See the CATHOLIC LAYMAN, Vol. I., p. 121, for a full account of this public record of Henry VIII.’s religious sentiments.

is still extant,* that four mules, laden with silver, were sent to one of the Cardinals, and five thousand gold crowns to another, for the purchase of their respective votes. Out of the entire conclave, there were only five Cardinals who did not sell their votes!

When Simon Magus offered money to Saint Peter for the purchase of a spiritual gift, Scripture records the Apostle's indignant reply (Acts viii. 20)—"Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." And yet, after the lapse of fifteen centuries from the time that Saint Peter uttered these words, what a scene do we behold in the capital of the Christian world? The office of highest rank and dignity in the Church—that office which claims to have been founded by the great Apostle himself, and which is supposed to confer the gift of infallibility—is put up, as it were, for sale, and shamelessly disposed of to the highest bidder! After this, who will venture to assert that the Church did not stand in need of a reformation?

We have seen how Alexander VI. secured his elevation to the Papedom: let us now inquire how he conducted himself in his office. Rome was filled with scenes of rapine and violence. Everything of which the clergy were possessed was, upon their decease, claimed by the Pope, as his property; so that no prelate or cardinal was allowed to make a will. The sums arising from the benefices while vacant were likewise secured; and the benefices themselves sold like common goods in a market. This abuse was carried to such a scandalous excess, that, as Cardinal Bembo observes in his History of Venice, the secular princes were obliged to provide against the evil, by prohibiting their subjects, under the penalty of banishment, from going to purchase benefices with their money at Rome.† It was with reference to these shameful transactions of the Pontiff that the well-known pasquinade (one of the first of its kind) was composed:—

Vendit Alexander claves, altaria, Christum.

Vendere jure potest; emerat ille prius.

"Alexander sells the keys, the altars, Christ himself; He has a right to sell them—he had bought them before."

Cruelty was another feature in the character of this Pope. We have only space to mention a single instance.‡ The Pope having heard that Giovanni Lorenzo, a Venetian, had written some satires against him, ordered him to be seized and thrown into prison. The Venetian senate sent orders to their ambassadors at Rome to intercede with the Pope in his behalf. To this the Pope replied, "that he was sorry he could not comply with their request, because the person for whom they interceded was already put to death by his orders, and, therefore, their intercession came too late." And, indeed, it was so, for the unfortunate man had been ordered to be strangled, and thrown into the Tiber.

We are obliged to touch but lightly upon the profligacy of the Pope's private life, not for want of ample materials, but because the subject is too revolting to admit of being treated fully in a paper intended for general circulation. Henry VIII. has been charged, and justly, with sensuality, and with inhuman conduct towards his wives. But he had not, like Alexander, made a vow of celibacy, and then lived for many years in open disregard of every precept of morality. We must pass over, for the reason just assigned, the history of the Pontiff's intrigue with Vanozza, which commenced in Spain, and was continued for many years after his removal to Rome. We must pass over the history of his four sons (one of whom was the notorious Caesar Borgia), and of his daughter Lucretia, upon whose memory, as well as that of her father and brother, the epitaph of Pontano has cast such an indelible blot.§ Without dwelling further, however, on the crimes of which his Holiness is accused, and in comparison with which Henry VIII. may be considered almost a miracle of continence, we transcribe, in the note below, an account of a scene which took place in the Pontifical Palace, on a Sunday evening, in October, 1502, which will give some idea of this Pope's shameless disregard of decency. As the passage is too gross to be translated, we give it in the original Latin, from the diary of Burchard, the Pope's Master of the Ceremonies, who appears to have been present at the disgraceful scene which he so circumstantially describes.||

* Burchard, Diar. p. 3, Hab. 1696.—"Quinque tantum Cardinales nihil voluerunt ab eo accipere. Dixerunt in Pontificatu voces dandas esse gratis, et non muneribus. Fertur etiam, antequam intraret in conclave, prefatum Borgiam, pro habenda voce dicti Ascanii et sequacium, misisse quatuor mulos oneratos argento ad domum Domini Ascanii, sub eo pretextu ut ibi custodiretur, dum essent in conclave, quod argentum fuit datum dicto Ascanio pro ejus voto."

† Quam plurimi sacerdotia, quæ habere bonis artibus non poterant Romæ coemerunt, quæ in urbe ejus rei consuetudo facultasque ab Alexandro instituta late palamque invaluerat.—Vol. 2, lib. 6, p. 217. Venet. 1718.

‡ Burchard Diar. p. 87, 88.

§ Alexandri filia, sponsa, nurus.

|| "Dominica ultima mensis Octobris in sero fecerunt cœnam cum Duce Valentiniensi in camera sua in palatio Apostolico quinquaginta meretrices honestæ, Cortegiane nuncupate, quæ post cœnam chorauerunt cum servitoribus et aliis ibidem existentibus, primo in vestibus suis, deinde nudæ. Post cœnam posita fuerunt candelabra communia mense cum candellis ardentibus, et projectæ ante candelabra per terram castaneæ, quæ meretrices ipsæ super manibus et pedibus nuas candelabra pertransientes colligebant. Tunc, Duce, et Lucretia sorore sua præsentibus et arripientibus. Tandem exposita dona ultimo, diplodes de serico, paria caligurn, bireta et alia, pro illis qui plures dictas meretrices carnaliter agnoscerent, quæ fuerunt in aut publicè ibidem carnaliter tractatæ arbitrio præsentium, et dona distributa Victoribus."—Burchard Diar. p. 77.

We gave in our number for October, 1852, vol. i., p. 169, a long extract from Cardinal Baronius, showing that similar enormities were perpetrated at Rome before the time of Pope Alexander VI.

We hasten on to the closing scene in the life of the Pontiff. We are informed by Guiccardini, as a well-known fact, that "it was the frequent custom both of Alexander and of his son, Caesar Borgia, to use poison, not only to avenge themselves upon their enemies, but still more, for the wicked purpose of robbing rich courtiers, cardinals, and others of their properties, and appropriating them to their own use."* Acting upon this plan, the Pope and his son determined to promote nine of the richest of the Prelates to be Cardinals, whom they resolved to dispatch by poison immediately after their promotion. But their scheme proved fatal to themselves. They invited the new Cardinals to sup at a vineyard, near the Vatican, belonging to Cardinal Adriano di Corneto, who, as he was extremely rich, was among the rest singled out to die by the same poison. Caesar Borgia, in order to execute this design, sent to the Pope's butler, who was to wait at supper, some particular flasks of wine, which he had mixed with a certain poison, called Canterelle, which he had frequently made use of upon similar occasions. He gave the butler a strict charge that none should taste of it but those whom he should particularly direct.

Accordingly, on the 10th of August, the Pope and Caesar, about the cool of the evening, came to the vineyard, where they were to sup. Some authors relate, that the Pope usually carried the consecrated host in a gold box, having been informed by a certain astrologer that while he carried the holy wafer about with him he should never die; but having now left it by accident in his apartment in the Vatican, as soon as he missed it, he dispatched Monsignor Caraffa to his chamber to bring it to him. While Caraffa was gone, Alexander being thirsty, and the weather exceedingly hot, desired the under butler to give him something to drink before he sat down to supper; the chief butler having gone to the Vatican to fetch a salver of peaches which he had forgotten. The under butler finding six particular flasks of wine in a corner, imagined that they contained better wine than the rest, and therefore poured out a glassful of the poisoned liquor, and gave it to the Pope, and Caesar Borgia. The latter, by the vigour of his youth, and the force of the powerful antidotes given to him by his physicians, escaped the effects of the poison; but Alexander, after lingering for a week in excruciating torments, died on the 18th of August, 1503, in the seventy-second year of his age.

"The following day," as Guiccardini relates,† "his corpse was carried, according to the custom of the Popes, into the Church of St. Peter. It was black, swollen, and disfigured, exhibiting the most manifest signs of poison. The whole city of Rome ran with incredible joy into St. Peter's to gaze upon the dead body of Alexander. They could not satisfy their eager desire to behold that serpent at last crushed, who, by his boundless ambition and destructive perfidy, by numberless examples of horrible cruelty and insatiable lust, by his unheard of avarice, and indiscriminate sale of every object, sacred and profane, had infected the whole world."

The same unfavourable estimate of the character of the Pontiff was formed by the historian Machiavelli, a devoted adherent of the family of Borgia, and, therefore, disposed to dwell as lightly as possible upon the dark features of his personal history; yet even he felt himself constrained to characterize his life and conduct by three ominous words—*lust, simony, and cruelty.*‡

Such was the fearful career of Pope Alexander VI. The world, perhaps, never beheld such an example of a notorious disregard of the holiest obligations, of open and abandoned profligacy, of a daring violation of all laws, human and divine. The Christian Church had long beheld and mourned over the faults and vices of preceding Pontiffs, and had often loudly called for a reform, both in the Head and members. The Popes, for a long series of years, had disregarded these warnings, and persevered in the same reckless course of conduct; but the patience of the world at length reached its limit; the cup was now nearly full, and the flagrant crimes of Alexander and his successor, Julius, caused it at length to overflow. Within fifteen years after the death of Alexander, the REFORMATION began; and we ask again, what impartial inquirer, after reading the history of that Pontiff, and the system of which he formed a part, will venture to assert that the Church did not stand in need of such a change?

When Roman Catholics attempt (as they often do) to draw attention away from more important questions to the personal character of those who brought that Reformation about, we think their Protestant friends will now know

* "Perchè è cosa manifesta, essere stata consuetudine frequente del Padre e suo (il Duce Valentino) non solo d'usare il veleno per vendicarsi contro agl' inimici, o per assicurarsi dei sospetti, ma eziando per scelerata cupidità di spogliare delle proprie facultà le persone ricche, i Cardinali, e altri cortegiani." Guiccard. Hist. d'Ital. Vol. iii., p. 163. Milano, 1803.

† Il giorno seguente, è portato morto secondo l'uso del Pontifici nella chiesa di San Piero, nero, cinto, e bruttissimo, segni manifestissimi di veleno. Concorse al corpo morto d'Alessandro in San Piero con incredibile allegrezza tutta Roma, non potendo saziarsi gli occhi di alcuno, di vedere spento un serpente, che con la sua immoderata ambizione e pestifera perfidia, e con tutti gli esempi di orribile crudeltà, di mostruosa libidine, e d'insatiable avarizia, vendendo senza distinzione le cose sacre e le profane, aveva attossicato tutto il mondo.—Guiccard. lib. vi., vol. iii., p. 162-4. Milano, 1803.

‡ "Lo spirito di Alessandro glorioso, Del qual seguirono le tante pedate Tre sue familiari e care ancelle, Lussuria, Simonia, e Crudeltate." Machiav. Dec. i., vol. v., 370. Italia, 1813.

how to bring them speedily back to more profitable subjects of discussion, by inviting them to compare the personal character of the very worst of the reformers with that of the head of the Roman Catholic Church, His Holiness Alexander VI.

DOES THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH OF ROME ANSWER THE TRUE ENDS OF DEVOTION?

NO. II.

WE attempted to show in our last, by way of clearing our path towards the discussion of this momentous question, that what too often pass in the world as *good works* but little deserve that name, and that practical men find it to be a truth that by their own good works they cannot merit heaven or earn salvation.

The question naturally arises, do we then wish to discountenance good works, or wish good works to be deemed useless or impracticable, because we hold that no amount of good works will gain a man entrance into Christ's heavenly kingdom? This we know is a favourite assertion of the advocates of the Church of Rome against those who hold the Scriptural doctrine of justification by faith, as if it were the inevitable result of that doctrine, that men who believe in it should disregard the moral law or the code of practical benevolence which our Blessed Lord so eminently taught, both by precept and example, while on earth; as if, in short, good works must be *useless* and *superfluous*, unless as in themselves constituting the passport to heaven, or as if all must be Antinomians, or opposers of the moral law of the Gospel, who do not hold the doctrine of human merit as the foundation of salvation.

Now, we hope to be able to establish the very reverse, and not only to show that the same Holy Scriptures which plainly inculcate the doctrine of justification by faith, and teach that man's salvation is the *free gift* of God—not the purchase by man for himself, or of his own deserving—also demonstrate that without holiness no man can see the Lord, and everywhere preach the strictest and purest morality and practical benevolence; but viewing the matter in a purely philosophical point of view, we hope to show there is no other way of *doing the will* of our Heavenly Father than by simply embracing the Gospel offer of a free, unmerited salvation, which is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ.*

Does it thence follow that we would discountenance good works or deem them useless or impracticable? God forbid. It is, on the contrary, because we are persuaded that it is the only way to produce and encourage *real* good works that we can, in a spirit of what we believe to be true philosophy, embrace the doctrines of Christianity as written in the pages of Holy Writ. When you want man to do good works before his heart is renewed and rendered happy by the joy of a full pardon and free salvation, you are, in our judgment, wanting a tree to bring forth fruit before it is planted. The Gospel plants the tree by the roots and not by the branches; it sows the love of God in the heart, through gratitude for salvation, in order to produce good works, and the good works, thus produced, are the fruits of humility, instead of the fruits of pride; a small difference, perhaps, in the eye of man, who is satisfied with the outward appearances, but immense in the sight of God, who looks at the immortal soul destined to live with him throughout eternity, and has taught us, in his Holy Word, that it was not the Pharisee who fasted twice in the week and gave tithes of all that he possessed, but the Publican who smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner, that was accepted with him. "I say unto you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, but he that *humbleth* himself shall be exalted."—Luke xviii. 14 (Douay Bible).

There are, in fact, two classes of so-called good works—*false* good works, which are the result of fear, and *real* good works, which alone can spring from love.

What happens in all those religions which demand good works under pain of damnation? They obtain what they call good works—by *fear*. Fear is the mainspring employed in all false religions to produce goodness; fear is the great secret lever by which priestcraft, in all ages, has worked upon mankind, to keep up their influence and swell their fortunes. The great apostle, St. Paul, everywhere in his writings urges the assurance of salvation—free, full, unmerited, certain salvation—on those whose hearts he wants to rejoice, and whose life he wants to sanctify. Ask the priests of Rome when a man is sure of going to heaven? They will tell you, "never;" but they urge the fear of hell, as if they wished to preserve and speculate upon it,† as the principal means of influencing the believer, and the fear of purgatory, as if Christ had never promised pardon to the penitent thief upon the cross, and

* "All you that thirst, come to the waters: and you that have no money make haste, buy and eat: come ye, buy wine and milk without money, and without any price."—Isaiah lv. 1. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. To him that thirsteth I will give of the fountain of the water of life, freely."—Apoc. xxi. 6. "And he that thirsteth let him come; and he that will, let him take the water of life, freely."—Apoc. xxii. 17 (Douay Bible).

† We have at this moment before us a book entitled "Hell Opened to Christians," illustrated by a series of engravings representing the infernal torments in a style well calculated to excite horror among the ignorant, but little likely, we think, to awaken piety or love to God in the soul of any one. We shall have occasion to deal with this tract again more fully in a future number.